**A Character Analysis of Sophocle’s Antigone**

We’ve all felt alone and worthless. When life beats us down, we want nothing more than a voice: we want to be heard, we want love, and we want attention. But sometimes, we don’t get that. And we wonder- is life really worth living? Sophocle’s Antigone was no different. She was just an unloved girl who wanted a chance.

            Antigone’s self-pity seemed to imply that she was already dreaming of suicide- all she really needed was a reason. Why so sad? She had been scorned and ridiculed for “the most painful of (her) cares, the thrice-repeated doom of (her) father” (865). After the highly publicized downfall of Jocasta and Oedipus, she and her siblings were the only bearers of the humiliating scorn of the people of Thebes. Shortly thereafter, her brothers died and left Antigone “unwept [and] friendless” (881). Even worse, Creon’s order to leave Polynices unburied painted another embarrassing streak of shame for Antigone to shoulder. As her family and her honor crashed down around her, Antigone was convinced that she has “seen nothing- nothing mad or shameful or dishonorable- that (was) not among.. (her) sorrows.”  (5) The only logical exit? Suicide. After all, “anyone who lives a life of sorrow as (she does), how could they not count it a blessing to die?” She only needed a noble cause to martyr to. And conveniently, a cause was found- “Could (her) fame be more gloriously established than by placing (her) brother in a tomb?” (518) Antigone fantasized over the glory that she could leave behind. Though no friend would groan over her "unwept fate” (886), her father’s incest hung over her head like a tarnished cloud, and her brother’s shame stained her reputation, she believed that setting things right with the gods would at least leave a small hint of honor.

            Her sense of upholding the family name and religion drove her to a fanatical obsession over Polynice’s burial. As she “(heaped) a tomb for (her) dearest brother” (81) to avoid “(being) found a traitor” (47), the text implies that she’s adamant the gods are on her side. She openly defied Creon by stating that she “(didn’t) intend to pay the penalty to the gods for violating these laws in fear of some man’s opinion.” (468) She threatened her sister with the vengeance of the dead: “you will be hateful to me, and the dead will hate you always.” (93) Creon started to notice her insanity; he saw “her insides in fury, not like someone in full control of her senses.” (506) But she apparently was oblivious to these comments; she“(pleased) those (she) should please most” (89), and “death and the dead will witness who did the deed” (558). Her obsession with death made her believe that “(her) soul has been dead” (75), and she jumped at the chance to “be the bride of death". (823)

            Despite her eagerness to end her life, she refused to go without fighting for a cause she was passionate about. She claimed she “shall succumb to nothing so awful as a shameful death.” (96) By being unshamed, it is assumed that she wanted to widely proclaim her martyrdom by “(showing) how nobly (she) honors her noble birth.” (38) She “groaned loudly” (435) as she buried Polynices, and afterwards “stood in denial of nothing.” (443). Perhaps she believed that after death, she would be honored for her resolute bravery and defiance. She convinced herself that her iron will was much more important than a fulfilled life. It is obvious that she was “the fierce daughter of a fierce father, she doesn’t know to bend with the wind.” (485). Antigone was an incredibly static character, never ridding herself of the “violent winds (that) still rage in her soul.” (937). How ironic that in the face of death, her actions showed that she was living the most. Her courageous and headstrong personality shined the clearest through her depression and desperation.

            In a way, it can be said that the play *Antigone* had a happy ending. Antigone had spent her life waiting, plotting, hoping for death, and her very last words were peaceful ones- “I am led away indeed, no longer merely waiting.” (947). Though her tragic hopelessness led to her grave, her death showed immense strength, religious conviction, and family pride. She fought for her death the way others fought for life, and through her battle, she found her voice.